United Nations A/C.4/60/SR.9

General Assembly
Sixtieth session

Official Records

Distr.: General
2 November 2005

Original: English

Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

Summary record of the 9th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Friday, 14 October 2005, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Ms. Rodriguez (Vice-Chairperson) ..... (Mexico)

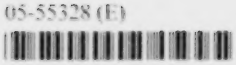
Contents

Agenda item 33: Questions relating to information (*continued*)

This record is subject to correction. Corrections should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned *within one week of the date of publication* to the Chief of the Official Records Editing Section, room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza, and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrections will be issued after the end of the session, in a separate corrigendum for each Committee.

05-55328 (E)



In the absence of Mr. Kyaw Tint Swe (Myanmar), Ms. Rodriguez (Mexico), Vice-Chairperson, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Agenda item 33: Questions relating to information (*continued*) (A/60/21 and A/60/173)

1. **Mr. Longhurst** (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland), speaking on behalf of the European Union, noted that the Acceding Countries Bulgaria and Romania, the Candidate Countries Turkey and Croatia, the Countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro, EFTA countries Iceland, Norway, members of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova, also aligned themselves with his statement.

2. Information on United Nations activities globally and publicity for the Organization's considerable achievements was crucial in bolstering support among all peoples for its mission, the more so at a time when the United Nations was seeking to improve its effectiveness, redress previous shortcomings and embark on ambitious reforms such as those established at the World Summit. The European Union commended the Under-Secretary-General and the staff of the Department of Public Information (DPI) for taking on the huge logistical challenge of dealing with unprecedented numbers of the world's press attending the Summit. It wished to express its satisfaction at the improvements under way in the management of the Dag Hammarskjöld Library since the end of 2004. It was also pleased with the further improvements in the content and technological development of the United Nations website, which was a key tool for enhancing multilingualism in the United Nations, welcomed the cooperation with the International Federation of Television Archives to preserve and restore the United Nations audio-visual collection and encouraged further steps in that direction.

3. The rationalization of the UNICs network around the world was becoming a regular feature of discussions in the Committee on Information and in the Fourth Committee. The European Union reiterated its strong view that the network was in serious need of overhaul and that concrete proposals were needed from the Secretariat covering timelines and objectives for rationalization. In 2002, it had lent its full support to the Secretary-General's proposals for the creation of regional hubs, beginning in Western Europe. It recognized that although it was an ambitious plan it could deliver real benefits. The decision to support that proposal had forced a number of European countries to take the difficult step of closing offices in their capitals, and the European Union therefore expected that full efforts would be made to see the initiative through and to create a global network that more effectively addressed the needs of customers.

4. The European Union welcomed the early implementation of the plan and noted that the budget proposal for DPI, which would be considered by the Fifth Committee in the present session, would be updated to take account of the implementation plans.

5. The European Union regretted that, once again, there were references in the Secretary-General's report to "fresh budget cuts" owing to lack of progress. That phrasing misrepresented the true position, since although the General Assembly had not approved the full amount of the increase requested, DPI had in fact been awarded a budget increase of 7.5 per cent for the current biennium. The Member States contributed significant financial support for public information in the United Nations, both through the regular budget and through the information components of the separately financed peacekeeping missions. At a time when many of its members were facing domestic budgetary pressures, the European Union felt that it had more than upheld its commitment to supporting public information at the United Nations.

6. The European Union stood ready to adopt the draft resolution prepared by the Committee on Information. The negotiations had been especially long and difficult in the current year, and it trusted that all members that had worked together to reach a consensus on this item would join in seeking its swift adoption.

7. **Mr. Kodera** (Japan) said that the Outcome of the 2005 World Summit called for strengthening and reforming the United Nations. The Department of Public Information (DPI) played a leading role in that connection and efforts to reform it should continue. In fact, under General Assembly resolution 13 (I) of 13 February 1946, "the activities of the Department should be so organized and directed as to promote to the greatest possible extent an informed understanding

of the work and purposes of the United Nations among the peoples of the world". According to draft resolution B, DPI should provide "accurate, impartial, comprehensive and timely" information on the activities of the Organization. That task had become urgent because the Organization's credibility had been undermined by misconduct and corruption that the Independent Inquiry Committee into the Iraq Oil-For-Food Programme (IIC) had found in the United Nations.

8. Japan had contributed $350,000 to fund the activities of the United Nations Information Centre (UNIC) in Tokyo for 2005. In three years, that contribution had increased by more than 70 per cent. UNIC Tokyo was the only centre from which the United Nations issued information in Japanese, and the year 2006 — marking the fiftieth anniversary of Japan's entry into the United Nations — offered a good opportunity for stimulating interest in the Organization's activities. Moreover, in 2005 Japan had donated to the Dag Hammarskjöld Library 38 compact disks containing more than 30,000 digitized General Assembly, Security Council and Economic and Social Council documents from the 1970s and 1980s. DPI had developed programmes to enrich the function of its libraries and reach out to the world more efficiently through new technologies. "EXPO 2005 Aichi Japan" on the theme of "Nature's Wisdom" had been on view from March through September 2005 and had been visited by more than 22 million people. The United Nations had helped to organize it, inter alia by setting up the Consultative Group for EXPO 2005. Important international issues, such as HIV/AIDS and other health questions had been discussed at the United Nations pavilion. UNIC Tokyo had publicized the participation of the United Nations in the event.

9. **Mr. Thema** (Botswana), speaking on behalf of the member States of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), said that the reorientation process undertaken by DPI would increase the efficiency, improve the products and enhance the flow of United Nations public information and communications, particularly to developing countries. The work that DPI carried out in partnership with other United Nations units in the areas of human rights, peacekeeping, decolonization, development and combating HIV/AIDS deserved increased support from the United Nations system to counter the onslaught of negative publicity. The Committee's innovative interactive session on the agenda item under consideration had been beneficial thanks to targeted enquiries on issues of concern to delegations and precise responses from the Under-Secretary-General.

10. Information was critical in the fight against the debilitating scourge of HIV/AIDS. Had they been armed from the outset with the facts as to the source, spreading mechanisms, symptoms and prevention of the pandemic, SADC member States might have stopped it from reaching its current proportions. HIV presently killed more mothers and children in the SADC region than anywhere else in the world. Shorter lifespans and the reduced number of skilled workers were reversing many of the gains made in the past.

11. Events similar to the Global Media Aids Initiative, which had been held in Cannes, France in 2005, should be encouraged in the SADC region in order to involve the local media establishment in the battle against HIV/AIDS. Moreover, SADC could develop a close working relationship with DPI with a view to promoting the SADC Common Agenda, which outlined the community's policies and strategies along the lines of the broad multidimensional development goals of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). NEPAD had enjoyed DPI support in promoting the activities of the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa.

12. SADC applauded DPI efforts to publicize the development agenda during the build-up to the High-level Plenary Meeting of the sixtieth session of the General Assembly. The multi-site launch of the Millennium Development Goals Report 2005 was crucial to counterbalancing skewed attention paid by the media to institutional reform issues. As a result of lack of information and strategic orientation, much time and effort had been expended fighting for what had turned out to be a meagre benefit.

13. The special needs of Africa required UNIC rationalization and regionalization. In the SADC region in particular, rural communities lacked the amenities of city life and the wherewithal to access the type of advanced technology needed to receive information disseminated from a single regional centre. Accordingly, a good blend of traditional communication means and current technology in the existing centres would be an effective and practical way of achieving broad coverage. SADC therefore

welcomed the proposal of DPI to retain the current centres, with the Pretoria centre playing a coordinating role and providing strategic communications guidance and support. Current centres in the various capitals of the region should be strengthened and receive the resources needed to operate effectively. An additional information centre should be established in Luanda to serve the needs of the five Portuguese-speaking nations on the continent.

14. **Mr. Malmierca** (Cuba) said that neoliberal globalization failed to promote access to technology for all and exacerbated inequity and disparity between the industrialized and the developing countries and between the haves and have-nots. The technology gap between North and South was becoming wider and that trend applied to the information and communication technologies (ICTs). Frequent and impressive breakthroughs in technology would be of little use to the millions of children that lacked schools and the millions of adults who were still illiterate. Information had become merchandise, used and manipulated by those who controlled the media through ever more concentrated corporations.

15. The countries of the South cherished hopes that the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), Phase II, scheduled to take place in Tunisia in November 2005, would formulate specific and practical solutions that would enable developing countries to integrate into the information society. To that end, developing countries were historically entitled to receive substantial and predictable financial resources from the developed world. Moreover, the United Nations should ensure equitable and balanced dissemination of information through its resource centres. The developing world deserved special treatment. For instance, radio should be favoured as a means of providing information to large illiterate populations.

16. Cuba was subjected to radio and television aggression by the United States of America on a daily basis in disregard of the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly. As part of an economic, financial and commercial blockade of Cuba, maintained for more than four decades, the United States Government used millions of dollars every year to finance, lead and support broadcasts from its territory encouraging illegal immigration, inciting to civil disobedience and blatantly misrepresenting the Cuban reality. The broadcasting facilities involved used advanced technology, including United States military aircraft, and were directly linked to well-known terrorists based, operating and enjoying full impunity in the United States. The United States Government thereby interfered in Cuba's internal affairs and infringed International Telecommunication Union (ITU) regulations and international law. The Cuban people, however, were a cultured and well-informed nation educated with the Revolution. Although peaceful, it would not allow the United States Government, driven by annexationist ambitions, to violate Cuban sovereignty.

17. **Mr. Christen** (Switzerland) welcomed the adoption by consensus of the draft resolution on United Nations public information policies and activities for it set down clear guidelines for the Department of Public Information that took a non-ideological and pragmatic approach. The compromise reached by the Committee on information on the regionalization/rationalization issue, however, was less than satisfactory for it did not give the Department the assistance that would enable it to bear regional specificities in mind as it continued to improve its communication work.

18. The modernization of the library services in both New York and Geneva had proceeded well. Their new motto, "From Collections to Connections", served to affirm a service culture and a willingness to incorporate new library technologies in a gradual, continuous process of updating.

19. Switzerland, with its four national languages, was in favour of multilingualism within the United Nations as a matter of principle and practicality in order to communicate effectively and to use the official languages as widely as possible.

20. He assured the Committee that his delegation would work towards constructive solutions and prevent the Committee on Information from being politicized.

21. **Mr. Patasani** (India) observed that the dynamic leadership of the Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information had provided a restructured and revitalized Department of Public Information, determined to optimize resources for maximum public impact. As the public voice of the Organization, the Department had met the challenge of communicating to the world the 2005 World Summit process and its outcome. Now the Department must make a concerted effort to meet the special needs of the developing countries in the field of information and

communications technology, given the vast digital divide that deprived many of their people of the benefits of the latest advances. At the same time, however, the traditional media — radio and the press — continued to be basic instruments in those countries in disseminating the main message of the United Nations, which should focus on core issues in social and economic development.

22. The United Nations information centres had a critical role to play in conveying the image of the United Nations and spreading its message to local populations, especially in developing countries. India remained a proponent of the gradual regionalization of the centres, given the need to make the most of scarce resources, as a way of promoting a more effective flow of information and expanding outreach activities.

23. As a leading troop-contributing country, India set great store by the relationship between the Department of Public Information and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, and was impressed by the strides the Department of Public Information had made in the past year in overcoming the perceptions of an uninformed public of the realities and successes of peacekeeping operations. The two departments must together devise and pursue a comprehensive communications strategy that highlighted the successes, which, at the very least would encourage countries to contribute troops.

24. The United Nations website was a remarkable success story, as evidenced by the more than one billion users recorded in 2004, and its impressive updating since. United Nations webcasting, particularly in the past year and during the 2005 World Summit, had been noteworthy, and the ongoing incorporation of all official languages in its programming was commendable.

25. The Department's outreach services, particularly its educational work, had fostered awareness of the United Nations action on urgent issues. The *UN Chronicle* deserved special mention, and had been widely consulted in its online version. The Department did well to aim to become a focal point for two-way interaction with civil society on matters of United Nations concern. The recently concluded Annual Conference of the Department of Public Information for Non-Governmental Organizations was a noteworthy case in point.

26. The Department should be encouraged to continue to emphasize performance evaluation by systematically assessing the impact of its work on the public. As it continued to make the United Nations voice heard loud and clear, the Department of Public Information would constantly need to improvise, modernize and reinvent.

27. **Mr. Choisuren** (Mongolia) said that information was a powerful tool in the hands of those who owned it. The overall impact of rapidly developing information technologies, especially the Internet, could be compared only to the invention of radio. Yet the widening digital divide prevented many nations from making the most of the immense opportunities, and the global news covered continued to be controlled mostly by powerful private media catering to the needs and interests of their target audiences in the North. Moreover, the enormous volume of information generated on a daily basis presented a challenge to smaller nations like Mongolia, whose voices might drown in an information ocean.

28. The voice of the United Nations was the voices of all nations combined. Hence the importance of the work of the Department of Public Information which gave objective information on global matters and drew attention to issues often not commercially attractive. The Department should be commended for having completed its reform and redirection under the leadership of the dynamic Under-Secretary-General at its helm. The Department must continue to evolve in the ever-changing information landscape, taking the Millennium Declaration as a guide to achieve greater public impact.

29. Having done excellent work during the preparations for the 2005 World Summit, the United Nations media must focus on promoting its Outcome globally, with special emphasis on the aspect of development.

30. The Department had shown creativity in using different means to spread the message of the Organization. Continued contacts of United Nations officials with the private media and with non-governmental organizations would be crucial in promoting the United Nations in the world, but national Governments also had a role to play in that respect.

31. In collaboration with a number of the specialized agencies, his own Government held weekly awareness-

raising campaigns on ongoing United Nations projects and programmes and their impact on the daily lives of people. It would, for instance, be holding a national conference on the follow-up to the 2005 World Summit Outcome; producing a documentary on Mongolia and the United Nations; and organizing a contest among secondary school students for the best articles and posters on the United Nations. Mongolia believed that the publication of a book for the general public on the major achievements of the United Nations over 60 years would be another valuable addition to the anniversary activities planned by the Department of Public Information.

32. **Mr. Gidor** (Israel) said that it would be difficult to exaggerate the importance of the Department of Public Information (DPI) as the most experienced and energetic partner of the Committee on Information in promoting the noble goals of the Organization. As it struggled to be heard alongside many competing narratives, it was disseminating ideals in a world increasingly suspicious of ideology, and in a way that convinced the alarmingly cynical international media of the sincerity of the United Nations efforts. The Department of Public Information was to be commended for its initiatives in improving communications, designing and maintaining the highly effective and user-friendly United Nations website, and modernizing the United Nations library system.

33. DPI had also done admirable work in facilitating the unprecedented twenty-eighth special session of the General Assembly to commemorate the sixtieth anniversary of the liberation of the Nazi concentration camps held in January 2005 and had made an important contribution to the groundbreaking exhibit on the same subject displayed both in New York and Geneva. Israel itself had, for the first time at the United Nations, proposed the inclusion in the agenda of the sixtieth session, under the heading "Promotion of human rights", of an item entitled "Holocaust remembrance". It would be submitting a draft resolution in plenary meeting, sponsored also by Australia, Canada, the Russian Federation and the United States. It would call, inter alia, for an annual United Nations day to commemorate the memories of the victims of the Holocaust, rejecting any form of Holocaust denial, and condemning religious intolerance. Israel considered it to be not merely a statement but an educational initiative, with potential universal application, designed to promote global understanding and mutual tolerance. If the United Nations could assume a greater role in promoting such initiatives, rather than merely providing a forum for international bickering, it would live up to the original ideals of its founding fathers.

34. United Nations mechanisms, including the Department of Public Information, were not immune to cynical exploitation. Despite the improved political climate in the Middle East and the cumulative Israeli gestures of goodwill, for instance, and the efforts of its Under-Secretary-General to introduce more objectivity and even-handedness, his was the only Member State still unfairly singled out for criticism by the Department in various seminars and publications. In Israel's view, the time had come to abolish the Department's special information programme on the question of Palestine and to put the Department's resources to better use by channelling them towards the goal of peace in the Middle East. It was disheartening that the Department did not have one Israeli employee on its staff, an exclusion that militated against a full understanding of the issues in the region. With the image of the United Nations in the Middle East region at a low point, the United Nations should avoid being the purveyor of anachronistic and unhelpful agendas and give an honest, objective presentation of information.

35. An honest portrayal of the truth depended on free information, and all too often regimes in the Middle East and elsewhere exploited the political situation to suppress their press. The Fourth Committee, supported by the Department of Public of Information, should have no qualms about advocating a free press and condemning oppressive controls. Let Israel illustrate the type of transparency that States could emulate. His Government upheld the principle of free information and its citizens consumed information eagerly, with the Internet — widely used by the 74 per cent of Israeli households with a computer — playing a crucial role in cementing the access to information.

36. Not all Governments, however, used information to further the interests of their own subjects or the ideals of harmony on which the United Nations was founded. The Department and the international community must struggle against the use of Government-supported media and educational establishments to incite to hatred, the fuel that powered terrorism.

37. Israel supported the Department's mandate wholeheartedly and urged it to rise to the enormous challenges that lay ahead.

38. **Mr. Alzayani** (Bahrain) said that the achievements of the Department of Public Information in 2005, inter alia, the activities carried out in the context of its worldwide communications strategy and in the area of human rights, peacekeeping and counter-terrorism, were attributable to its systematic approach in establishing a new culture of evaluation and results-based management. For information to be fully effective, however, it was imperative to narrow the digital divide between the developing and advanced countries and DPI could play a vital role to that end, such as the establishment of the United Nations Information Technology Service (UNITes), the Health InterNetwork and the United Nations Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) Task Force. United Nations information centres also were a significant means of ensuring the free circulation of information on a wide scale and of raising public awareness of the United Nations and its principles, purposes and activities. Further rationalization of those centres in the absence of consultation with the host countries was therefore a cause for concern, particularly in the developing countries, many of which had no advanced ICT capabilities. In such cases, the conventional communications media were the key source of information and consequently should not be overlooked as a means of promoting the information products of the United Nations.

39. The Department's information activities on the question of Palestine, to which Bahrain attached particular importance, would continue in the interest of achieving a just solution to the question.

40. **Mr. Onishchenko** (Ukraine) said that the Department of Public Information (DPI) should play a central role in promoting a positive public image of the United Nations and providing comprehensive and timely information about United Nations activities. He commended the specific steps taken by the Department in the areas of information and communication in order to implement the new strategic goals and structural reforms, and its work relating to the comprehensive development and improvement of the network of United Nations information centres, which were important in maintaining direct contact with local communities. The information component of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Ukraine was effective both in presenting a unified image of the United Nations and in enhancing information activities in major areas of the work of the United Nations. Significant improvements had been made to the United Nations website using the latest technology, and he welcomed the Department's initiatives towards further integration of the new information and communication technologies into its communication infrastructure. Commendable efforts had been made to achieve a more modern, highly integrated and efficient system of library services within the United Nations.

41. **Mr. Pato** (Togo) said that new information and communication technologies had enabled the public to watch live coverage of the 2005 World Summit in most countries in the world on the United Nations website. However, many people in developing countries were still cut off from information by poverty and language. For the United Nations information centres to function effectively, they must act in full awareness of local conditions. The information centre for Togo and Benin in Lomé had published documents on human rights, HIV/AIDS and the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals in the two principle languages of Togo, Ewe and Kabye. For some time to come, radio would remain the most effective medium of communication with people living in remote villages, and the Lomé centre had broadcast in the official languages of Togo on national radio. The centre was in close touch with the Governments of Togo and Benin, research institutes, training and education institutions, and was the most useful facility for anyone interested in finding out about the United Nations as it possessed a library and in the near future would have a website. The Government was aware of the importance of information in our time, and Togo had many radio and television channels and a free press. The provision of balanced and objective information strengthened peace and tolerance within communities, and should be promoted.

42. **Mr. Almaabri** (Yemen) said that the United Nations information centre in Sana'a played an important role in disseminating information on the Organization and on recent developments in the Arabian Gulf region, as well as on activities in Yemen, including international and regional conferences that reflected the country's progress in advancing democracy and freedom. He was therefore gratified that the centre was to remain in place and hoped that

the Department of Public Information would take such necessary measures as appointing a director capable of discharging the responsibilities of the task in a region where the reputation of the United Nations was now becoming clouded and distorted.

43. He would appreciate a more equal balance in efforts to make information available in the six official languages. It was essential to give developing countries the opportunity to enhance their information capacities, in particular through training programmes for journalists, information technology transfer, information exchange with more advanced countries, narrowing of the digital divide and the creation of a strategy designed to establish an information balance at the global level. He therefore hoped that practical measures to fulfil such aspirations would be adopted at the World Summit on the Information Society to be held in Tunis in November 2005.

44. **Mr. Sealy** (Trinidad and Tobago), speaking on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), said that world public opinion concerning the United Nations and the global issues with which it dealt was shaped by the relations of the Department of Public Information with the media and civil society and the local channel was the United Nations information centres. The human and financial resources available to the centres were barely adequate to the task, especially in the case of the regional centres. Thus the regional centre in Port of Spain had responsibilities to some 14 island countries which made up CARICOM. As an expression of its political commitment to the work of the centre, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago had assumed financial responsibility for the rental of its current office. The Department should adequately underwrite the cost of the UNDP national information officer in Kingston, Jamaica who would be responsible for meeting the information needs of CARICOM countries in the Northern Caribbean. The regular budget should provide adequate funds to cover the activities of the Department.

45. Over the preceding five months the Port of Spain centre had launched a region-wide website; supervised media coverage for the CARICOM Heads of Government Conference held in St. Lucia from 3 to 6 July 2005 and set up bilateral meetings for senior United Nations officials with Heads of Government; promoted media coverage of the centre; organized a Peace Day in collaboration with the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Trinidad and Tobago and a local non-governmental organization; promoted the establishment of a United Nations Association in Belize. Proposed activities included events to commemorate United Nations Day on 24 October, and a media training programme in Port of Spain for 24 regional journalists in collaboration with the United States Embassy.

46. The Department of Public Information had an important role to play in both development and peacekeeping, and it should work more closely with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. In many regions of the globe, radio and the print media were still the fundamental mechanisms for the circulation of information and resources should be made available for the Caribbean Unit of United Nations Radio.

47. **Mr. Marsh** (United States of America) commended the Head Librarian of the Dag Hammarskjöld Library and all of her staff for energetically working to position the Library as one of the central information management units of the Secretariat. His delegation looked forward particularly to direct support services aimed at helping staff and delegations carry out their duties, especially in the present environment in which all participants were faced with information overload. The United States was pleased to note that the role of library staff was being broadened to enable them to collaborate more closely with users in their daily work, not only by ensuring that the most relevant and appropriate information was delivered to them when they needed it but also by advising users on which tools to use, and how to use them.

48. His delegation commended DPI for its continuing efforts to increase the effectiveness of the United Nations information centre system. The overall goal remained to help fulfil the substantive purposes of the United Nations by strategically communicating the activities and concerns of the Organization in order to achieve the greatest public impact. The United States was not convinced that the regionalization and rationalization process would have continued to move forward sufficiently to effect real change even if the UNIC budget had not been cut. In that regard, it wished to point out that the United States decision to reduce the budgetary allocation to the UNIC system had been willingly agreed to by all participants in the negotiations.

49. He wished to respond to the comment by the Under-Secretary-General during the previous day's interactive session that DPI was "the stepchild of the Organization" and was persistently targeted for budget cuts. While, like other departments of the Secretariat, DPI had been subject to intergovernmental review in the context of the budget process, in fact its budget had steadily increased over the past three biennia. In any event, for a variety of reasons the information centre system continued to be in need of further rationalization.

50. He commended DPI for the timely distribution of digital images of United Nations meetings and events, live webcasting of the High-level Plenary, and for working closely with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations in ensuring the effective deployment and ongoing functioning of public information components in peacekeeping missions.

51. He said he regretted having once again to respond to a statement made by the Cuban delegation. The United States Government took seriously its international obligations, particularly those under the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) concerning avoidance of harmful interference in the services of other countries; for 46 years the Cuban people had been denied the right to choose their own representatives, to voice their opinions without fear of reprisal, to assemble, or to organize freely.

52. The Cuban government's opposition to Radio and TV Martí was driven by fear of the consequences if the Cuban people were to receive uncensored information about their own country and the world around them. The Castro regime continued to deny the Cuban people their human rights and fundamental freedoms, betrayed them politically, failed them economically, and wronged them by its unrelenting injustice. The United States felt that the Cuban people deserved a government committed to democracy and the full observance of human rights.

53. **The Chairman** invited the Committee to take action on draft resolutions A and B contained in chapter IV of document A/60/21, and on the draft decision in the same document (immediately following the two draft resolutions).

54. **Mr. Longhurst** (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland), speaking on behalf of the European Union, suggested that in the penultimate preambular paragraph of draft resolution B, the reference to "resolution 56/262 of 15 February 2002" should be changed to "resolution 59/309 of 22 June 2005".

55. *Draft resolution A, draft resolution B as orally amended and the draft decision were adopted.*

56. **Ms. Thomas** (Cuba), in exercise of the right of reply, contradicted the assertion by the representative of the United States of America that there were only two broadcast channels directed at Cuba. In fact, there were 16, 14 of which belonged to organizations that promoted or were directly linked to known terrorist elements operating with total impunity in the territory of the United States of America. Contrary to what the representative of the United States was attempting to convey, that country's aggression via radio and television against Cuba served only to demonstrate the total disdain of its Government for the rules governing international relationships. The Cubans did not desire its broadcasts, and did not need them. Thanks to the revolution, which had provided universal access to education, and made great efforts to provide all people with daily updated information about everything occurring in Cuba and worldwide, Cubans today were educated enough to distinguish the true from the false.

57. It should be understood, once and for all, that Cuba had the revolution it desired, was ready to defend it and was convinced that even if not perfect, it was a thousand times better than what the Government of the United States wished to impose. The slanderous and shameful media war that the United States Government had waged against Cuba, using its habitual lies and not stopping short of interference in Cuba's internal affairs, confirmed once again the demonstrated inability of Washington to learn from the failures which its anti-Cuba policy had suffered, one after another, over more than four decades.

58. Once again, the United States of America, the Government with the least moral authority to speak of the human rights of any country, sought to manipulate that issue to accuse Cuba. It even dared accuse the country that had made the core of its policy the protection of all the rights of all of its population, without any discrimination, whether social or racial. Once again, the representative of the United States of America was raising the issue of "dissidents", whereas the so-called dissidents were in reality mercenaries receiving money and guidance from the Government of the United States. Those paid voices did not represent

the sentiments of the great majority of the Cuban people, and sought to turn their own country into a United States protectorate.

59. However much it disturbed the representatives of the United States, Cuba would continue to denounce, in any necessary forum and on any appropriate occasion, the genocidal embargo policy of that country's Government. At the same time, it would continue its policy of large-scale development of new information and communications technologies, using its modest material and financial resources.

The meeting rose at 12.20 p.m.